

FEMA Public Notice

Hickory Northeast Wastewater Treatment Facility Hardening and Stream Restoration Project

Hickory, North Carolina

The City of Hickory has applied for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program funding through North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM) as a sub-recipient.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal actions must be reviewed and evaluated for feasible alternatives and for social, economic, historic, environmental, legal, and safety considerations. Under Executive Order (EO) 11988 and EO 11990, FEMA is required to consider alternatives, and to provide a public notice of any proposed actions in or affecting floodplains or wetlands. EO 12898 also requires FEMA to provide the opportunity for public participation in the planning process and to consider potential impacts to minority and low-income populations. This notice may also fulfill requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Funding for the proposed project will be conditional upon compliance with all applicable federal, tribal, state, and local laws, regulations, floodplain standards, permit requirements and conditions.

Sub-Applicant: City of Hickory

Project Title: City of Hickory, Northeast Wastewater Treatment Facility Hardening and Stream Restoration Project; EMA-2020-BR-100-0017

Location of proposed work/Facility: Snow Creek Pump Station

Address: 310 Cloninger Mill Rd NE, Hickory, North Carolina

Latitude/Longitude: 35.788283, -81.307406

Approximate Date(s) of New Construction: 10/1/2023-3/30/2025

Special Flood Hazard Area Zone:

This project is for flood hardening and streambank restoration at the Northeast WWTF. The influent pump station is currently located in an AE Flood Zone. Confirmation of location in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) was determined by the Flood Insurance Rate Map, Map Number: 3710372400J, dated 9/5/2007. The proposed mitigation project consists of two major components: First, a protective berm will be constructed around the Northeast Wastewater Treatment Facility (NEWWTF) influent pump station. The berm will tie into the existing hillside and driveway in a manner to prevent floodwaters from reaching the pump station. The second component of the mitigation effort will be the installation of natural and environmentally sensitive stream restoration and bank stabilization measures along approximately 2,000 feet of Falling Creek. The proposed work conforms to all applicable State of North Carolina and local floodplain regulations.

Proposed Work and Purpose:

The City of Hickory will construct a berm feature surrounding the existing station location. The top of the berm will be constructed to an elevation of 962 feet (NAVD88) or approximately 2 feet about the 500-year flood elevation. This natural berm will tie into the existing hillside of the driveway from Cloninger Mill Road NE and wrap around the south side of the pump station. On the far southeast corner of the site, Falling Creek encroaches too closely upon the pump station to allow an appropriate amount of room for a berm to be constructed. Therefore, a concrete floodwall will tie the western berm to the eastern berm. The eastern berm will then continue from the concrete floodwall, along the east side of the pump station location and tie back into the existing grade near the northeast corner of the site. Regarding the stream restoration and bank stabilization measures, the design approach will emphasize nature-based solutions and materials and recommend a combination of floodplain benching, bank regrading, bio-engineered structural enhancements, natural fiber matting surface stabilization, and intensive revegetation with the appropriate native riparian plant species. This nature-based approach will achieve greater stability within the reach of the Falling Creek stream banks and will reduce the severity of erosion and encroachment from future flood events on the NE WWTF and NE WWTF influent pump station.

Project Alternatives:

Alternative #1 (No action): The “No Action” alternative was determined to be infeasible because it would provide no protection to the pump station or to the wastewater treatment facility from either flooding or erosion.

Alternative #2 (Relocation): Analysts investigated whether the station could be moved, either to a higher elevation or out of the floodplain entirely. However, it was determined that no appropriate location exists that would allow for the protection of the pump station while maintaining service to the WWTF. Additionally, relocating the pump station would not serve to assist in the mitigation of future erosion impacts so evident over the last several years.

Comment Period:

Comments are solicited from the public; local, state or federal agencies, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of the proposed project. The comments should be made in writing and addressed to:

FEMA Region 4

3003 Chamblee-Tucker Road

Atlanta, Georgia, 30341

Alternatively, comments may be emailed to: FEMA-R4EHP@fema.dhs.gov. Please send comments with the subject line [EMA-2020-BR-100-0020 COMMENT].

All comments are due by no later than 30 days of the posted date of this notice